

These officials also noted, however, that forcing military action in Iraq without prior consultation with, if not outright support from, the international community risks a potentially even more threatening set of circumstances in the Gulf with negative impacts on energy security as well as the security of Israel.

THE RETIREMENT OF ALEX LEWIS

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, today the Senate loses one of its most valued employees to retirement. After 35 years of dedicated service, Alex Lewis of the Recording Studio is stepping down.

Alex began work for the Architect of the Capitol in 1967 at the ripe old age of 20. He started work here as an electrician's helper. By the 1970s he was running and maintaining the Senate and House audio systems, moving to the Senate full time in 1991.

In 1994, he helped bring the Senate into the computer age, working tirelessly over many late nights and weekends and under a tight deadline to replace the old Senate sound system with the state-of-the-art digital system we use today.

That can-do attitude, his friendliness and cooperativeness was respected by everyone who worked with him. And, in the last 3 years as studio supervisor, Alex was respected for his caring, consideration, and fairness by everyone here in this body.

Alex said that having the opportunity to be witness to more than three decades of historical events at the Capitol is something he will always treasure. Today, all of us in the Senate family want to express how much we treasure his service to this institution. We thank him and we wish him well.

Mr. President, I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Maine is recognized.

(The remarks of Ms. COLLINS, Mr. BOND, and Mr. SMITH of Oregon pertaining to the introduction of S. 2023 are printed in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

EXTENSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent the Senate extend morning business until 1 o'clock today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

NOMINATION OF CHARLES PICKERING, SR.

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I rise today to express my deepest-felt disappointment in the decision of the Judiciary Committee yesterday against the nomination of Judge Charles Pickering, a jurist of the highest character and proven dedication to public service.

Mr. President, I will not repeat my defense of Judge Pickering's record, which I addressed here yesterday.

There are particular reasons why I am disappointed and saddened. First, certainly, is the unfairness with which the Judiciary Committee treated Judge Pickering's record.

I feel awful for Judge Pickering and his family for the way that the special interest groups and the liberal activists have distorted his record.

It has come to the point that men and women who put themselves up for public service and the Senate confirmation process are heroes, willing to sacrifice their good name and peace of mind.

I also feel terribly for the people of Mississippi, and about what this decision says to them after the long distance they have traveled to correct past wrongs. I feel terribly for the African Americans from Mississippi who stood by Judge Pickering, at risk to their own reputations.

Opponents have made much of the meager 26 reversals that Judge Pickering has had, an attempt to open old and painful wounds by using the all-too-familiar race card and suggesting that Judge Pickering has a poor record in civil rights cases.

They claim that Judge has a poor record on voting rights. In fact, he has had only four voting rights cases—only four—and he has been appealed on the merits in none of them. My staff has counted almost 200 decisions, and there may be more, in which Judge Pickering has applied the various civil rights laws of the United States with neither an appeal nor a reversal.

Opponents sought desperately to find aggrieved litigants with an ax to grind. They have found almost none. That is amazing for somebody who is in the Federal and State courts for much of a legal career. The African American parties who were involved in one of the four voting rights cases have even written to support the confirmation of Judge Pickering—the same judge who ruled against them.

Many of my colleagues are lawyers. They know full well, as did these African American parties who support Judge Pickering that just ruling one

way or another in a case does not mean you are against the underlying law. With this, does it mean that every judge who has overturned a drug sentence is pro-drugs? Obviously not. We all know better than that.

The judge's record is clear and distinguished. But I venture to say that the opponents of Judge Pickering are not interested in accentuating the positive record, to say the least. It is not politically expedient to do so.

Take the case of little Jeffrey Hill. His parents believed that their son was entitled to receive a free appropriate education under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

Jeffrey's parents sued and stood alone against the State of Mississippi. Judge Pickering, as he has done in cases involving homosexuals, African-Americans and others, appropriately found that the law in that case required Mississippi to educate handicapped children. Judge Pickering gave little Jeffrey Hill his day in court. He ruled on the law.

Yesterday Senators on the Judiciary Committee received a letter from three dozen members of the House of Representatives, including the former chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, Mr. HYDE.

House Members asked that the Judiciary Committee repudiate extreme liberal, left-of-mainstream special interest groups that have raised Judge Pickering's religious views as an issue, going so far as to attack Judge Pickering for a speech he gave on the Bible when he was president of the Mississippi Southern Baptist Convention.

I ask unanimous consent that the House letter be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the letter was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

REPUBLICAN STUDY COMMITTEE,
Washington, DC, March 13, 2002.

HOUSE MEMBERS URGE SENATORS TO
REPUDIATE RELIGIOUS TESTS FOR JUDGES
Outside Groups Attempting to Create a Religious Test in Order to Defeat the Nomination of Judge Pickering

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Over three dozen Members of the House of Representatives today sent a letter to Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee asking them to repudiate attempts by groups such as the People for the American Way to establish a defacto religious test preventing persons of faith from serving as federal judges.

Rep. Walter Jones (R-NC), stated, "In their campaign against the nomination of Judge Charles Pickering to the Court of Appeals, a number of outside interest groups have asserted that Judge Pickering is unfit because he 'promotes religion from the bench.' A close examination of these allegations and Judge Pickering's record clearly indicate that what opponents of his nomination are really objecting to is the fact Judge Pickering is personally a man of religious faith."

Rep. Joe Pitts (R-PA) added, "The failure of the Senate Democrats to repudiate the charge that Judge Pickering is unfit for the Judiciary because of his religious faith sends a very clear message: 'So long as Democrats control the Senate, religious people will be prohibited from serving as judges.'"

The text of the letter sent to Senate Judiciary Committee Members is reset on the next page: